

Submitted by
Samantha Harkins

May 12, 2010



Michigan
Association
of Counties



We couldn't agree more with recent comments from the media industry, including the Feb. 21 Grand Rapids Press editorial, about the importance of having open and transparent local governments. Allowing local units of government to publish legal notices online is not only a significant cost savings for communities and taxpayers, **while increasing** the transparency of government. It would allow more individuals and corporations to see what the local governments are doing. Newspaper readership is significantly down. According to an ARP poll this month, fewer than three in 10 adults read a print newspaper every day. A majority of Americans receive their news via television and a third of those ages 18-49 get most of their news online.

The simple fact shown by these numbers is that Americans get their news differently than they did even a decade ago. As a result, HBs 5845, 5847, 5848, 5853, 5916 and 5917 are sensible first steps in ensuring that public notices are viewable by a larger audience and more available to the general public. These bills would require local units of government to post legal notices in a clerk's office and in another medium such as Internet or television. Internet search engines, such as Google and Yahoo, make it far more likely that people will find and read these legal notices when posted online.

Newspapers nationwide are struggling with many going out of business and countless others decreasing the number of days they are publishing. Most notably in Michigan, the Ann Arbor news ceased publishing last summer. Other Michigan newspapers including The Flint Journal, The Saginaw News and The Bay City Times have reduced publications to three or four days a week. This leaves local units of government with fewer publication options, and it leaves the public not knowing where to find public notices.

In addition, to better manage declining revenues, many local government clerks have been forced to publish notices in alternative publications with lower subscription and advertising rates and much smaller audiences. As a result, the current publication requirement is actually limiting the number of people who see these notices.

Newspaper publication requirements cost local governments and taxpayers millions of dollars every year. For example, a poll of around 100 municipalities across Michigan found that they spent \$1.2 million on legal notices. This doesn't even include the amount spent by townships and counties. Unfortunately, with property tax revenue declining and state revenue sharing dollars being cut, funding must be prioritized for essential government services – police and fire protection, roads, sewers and other infrastructure projects.

This legislation isn't about being anti-transparency or anti-newspaper. Quite to the contrary: This Legislation expands public access to legal notices. This is a common sense change in response to the way we receive our news and the economic situation that plagues our local units.

http://www.azgov.org/government/city_administr...
Free Notice

government services news contact us login
Home > Government > City Administration > City Clerk > Legal Notices
Ann Arbor government

- Legislative Information Center
- Elections
- Ordinances and City Code
- Freedom of Information Act
- Legal Notices

Select Department
Select Online Service

Legal Notices

The ordinances listed below have recently been approved by the Ann Arbor City Council. To view the official publication notice for any ordinance, click on the Ordinance file link below. Ordinances that are required by law to be published in the newspaper are also printed in the Thursday edition of the Washtenaw Legal News.

The entire language of each approved ordinance is available online by visiting our Legislative Information Center or by clicking the Council File link below.

The Ann Arbor City Code of Ordinances can also be found online. Click the link below and you will be directed to the Municipal Code online.

To view any of the files below, you will need Acrobat Reader.

Ordinance No.	Council File No.	Name of Chapters Effected	Date Published to Web	Effective Date
ORD-10-03 (pdf)	09-1254	Chapter 126, Section 10.77 - Parking Fines	4/20/10	4/30/10
ORD-10-10 (pdf)	10-0106	Chapter 55, Zoning - Retail Plaza Property, Northwest Corner of Platt and Ellsworth Roads	4/16/10	5/2/10
ORD-10-12 (pdf)	10-0195	Chapter 55, Zoning - Gallup One Stop Gas Station, 2955 Packard Rd	4/20/10	5/2/10



Sign up to receive legal notices Web page e-mail updates.

Contact Information
Ann Arbor City Clerk
100 E. Main Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
734.774.6100
CityClerk@annarbor.org
M-F 8:30am - 5:00pm



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Publisher

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May 11, 2010

House Committee:

My name is Jennifer Shuster and I am the publisher of an online only community newspaper serving the community of Leslie, Michigan. I also serve as member of the Leslie City Council, therefore, I am fully aware of the high expense municipalities have and continue to endure in order to publish their legal notices.

I am proud to stand with the Michigan Municipal League in their efforts to make it permissible for municipalities to publish their legal notices through online media sources. My online newspaper, The Leslie Weekly Guardian, has been recognized as the very first online only newspaper to join the Michigan Press Association. This accomplishment has paved the way for other online news media which can operate their businesses in a more financially stable manner without the burden of printing and distribution costs. This savings is then passed on to advertisers and, hopefully with your approval, municipalities, townships and even school districts who need to publish legal notices.

I hope the State of Michigan will continue to support this trend by allowing legal notices to be published online. This will result in a tremendous cost savings for local government entities and financial security for online news sources that strive to provide up to date news information. It is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Shuster
Publisher
The Leslie Weekly Guardian